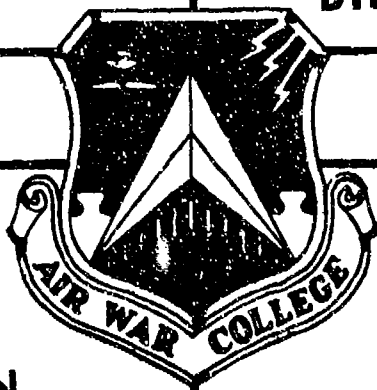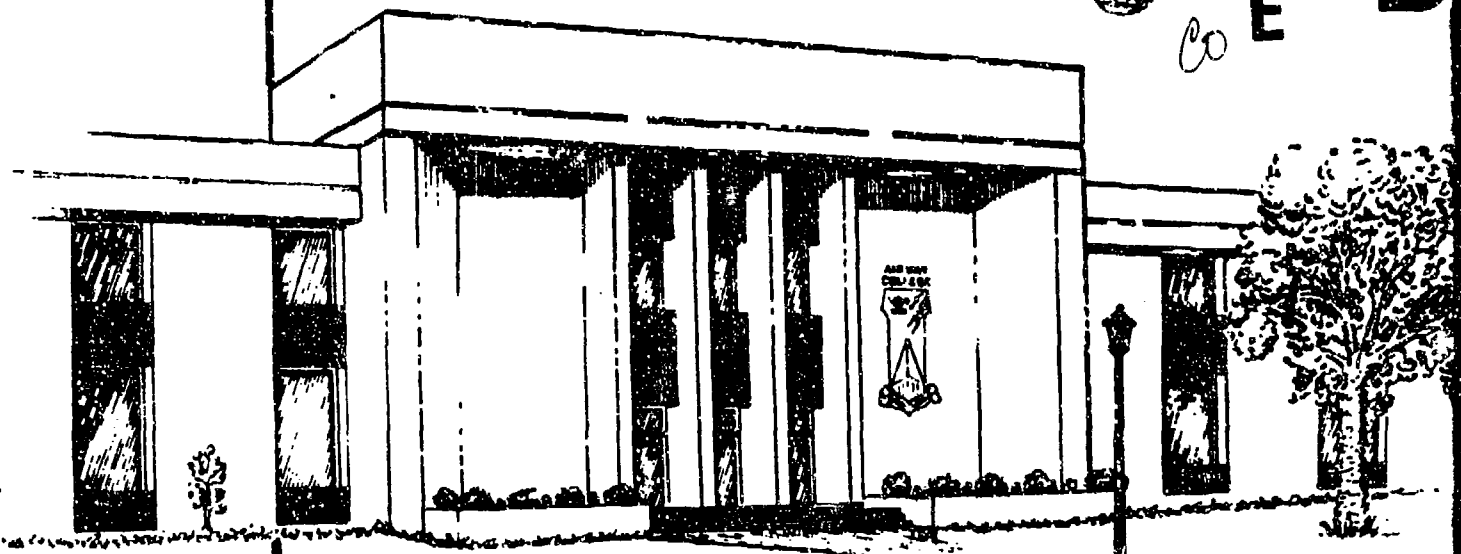②

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RESEARCH REPORT

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THE ESSENCE OF OPERATIONAL MANEUVER

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES P. MCGOURIN, USA

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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THE ESSENCE OF OPERATIONAL MANEUVER

by

James P. McGourin

Lieutenant Colonel, US Army

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Graham W. George

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: The Essence of Operational Maneuver

AUTHOR: James P. McGourin, Lieutenant Colonel, US Army

Operational Art, the link between strategy and tactics is currently a favorite topic for doctrinal discussion. Yet the operational level application of the elements of combat power -- maneuver, firepower, protection and leadership -- has not been fully addressed.

This paper focuses on defining operational maneuver. First, current doctrinal definitions of operational art and maneuver are examined. Then, General Robert E. Lee's defense of Richmond during the Civil War and General Douglas MacArthur's campaign to defend Australia and advance to the Philippines are outlined. These two vignettes highlight how these two masters of operational art used operational maneuver to win their campaigns. The evidence drawn from current doctrine and the two historical examples is analyzed to disclose the essence of operational maneuver. $(S\d{\cdots})$

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel James P. McGourin (M.P.S., Western Kentucky University) was commissioned a 2LT of Armor in 1969 after graduation from Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington. After attending Armor Officer Basic, Airborne and Ranger Schools, his initial assignment was to 3d Squadron,12th Cavalry in Germany. There he served in C troop and commanded Headquarters Troop. In 1972 he was transferred to Fort Polk, Louisiana, where he commanded an AIT Infantry Company and was a battalion S3. He commanded C Troop, 4th Squadron, 7th Cavalry in Korea in 1974, and returned to Fort Knox, working with the Directorate of Combat Developments, in 1975. LTC McGourin was assigned to 1st Bn,70th Armor, Wiesbaden, Germany in 1977. There he served as the S3 and executive officer. He also was the S3 of the 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division while in Wiesbaden. He was transferred MacDill Air Force Base in 1982 where he was the XO to the J2, Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force and an intelligence analyst and section chief for Africa, US Central Command. LTC McGourin returned to Germany and commanded the 3rd Squadron 12th Cavalry from May 1986 to June 1988. Professional military education includes the Armor Officers' Advance Course and the Army Command and General Staff College. LTC McGourin is currently attending the US Air Force Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, class of 1989.

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INTRODUCTION

Most modern military strategists, armchair or otherwise, regard themselves as experts of the art of military maneuver. The United States Army's doctrinal field manual for operations, FM 100-5, devotes several pages to a description of various maneuvers, and the benefits to be accrued from properly using maneuver as an element of combat power. Much of what we read about and experience is tactical maneuver. Another level of the art, operational maneuver, is rarely addressed, let alone exercised, and remains a rather vague concept.

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the meaning of operational maneuver. First, I will examine how doctrine defines the term, then an exploration and analysis of two historical vignettes will allow two great American military leaders to show how they used operational maneuver to win campaigns. The time, geography, weapons and technology differ, but both General Robert E. Lee and General Douglas MacArthur were masters of the same art. The evidence drawn from doctrine and the two historical examples will help draw conclusions about the essence of operational maneuver.

OPERATIONAL ART AND MANEUVER

The United States Army's AirLand battle doctrine, as described in the May 1986 operations field manual, defines operational art as "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations, through the design, organization and conduct of campaigns and major operations". (2:10) This definition keys on the relationship operational art has to strategy. Decisions concerning when, where and for what purpose forces fight, must serve the stated strategic goal. (2:10) Operational art implicitly requires commanders to protect friendly vulnerabilities, sustain friendly forces to achieve objectives and visualize variations that win campaigns without exceeding available resources. (2:30,59,180-181)

The operational commander conducts his campaign by targeting combat power, the synergistic force created by combining the elements of maneuver, firepower, protection and leadership, against the enemy's center of gravity. That is, the operational commander concentrates combat power against the capability, characteristic or location from which the enemy derives his freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight. (2:179) Typical center of gravity targets are command and control nodes, critical force components, reserves, lines of communication, logistic infrastructures, decisive (vice key) terrain, force cohesion, popular/political support and the will to win. (11:25) "Clausewitz defines it as the hub of all power

and movement, on which everything depends." (2:179) Operational commanders must constantly focus on the enemy's center of gravity, adjust operations if that center of gravity changes and protect their own key vulnerabilities. (2:179-180)

Before zeroing in on operational maneuver, one other aspect of operational art must be clarified. Operations are the link between "the strategic objective in the theater and the tactical movements, engagements and supporting activities in which forces are employed". (11:17) The linkage and distinction between strategy, operations and tactics is an important concept. Operations focus on efficiently maneuvering combat power to the battlefield and sequencing the application of combat power to achieve the strategic goal. Tactics apply combat power to a specific engagement or battle by positioning forces to gain and retain the advantage. Tactics use firepower to exploit the advantage and protect and sustain forces prior to, during and after the engagement. (11:60) The Lee and MacArthur vignettes will highlight the link their operational maneuvers had to strategic goals, and their use of operational maneuver, instead of tactical maneuver, to win campaigns.

The 1982 version of FM 100-5 defines maneuver as the dynamic element of battle by which forces concentrate in critical areas to gain the advantage of surprise and momentum. Effective maneuver maintains or restores the initiative and enables small forces to defeat larger ones. (1:7-7) The scheme

of maneuver is the foundation of a battleplan. It determines force allocation, supporting fires, combat support and combat service support priorities. (1:7-8) The latest FM 100-5 broadens the concept by defining maneuver as an essential element of combat power that places the enemy in a position of disadvantage. Commanders maneuver to concentrate or disperse forces to secure a positional advantage that materially effects the ability to force their will on the enemy. (2:175) Maneuver orients on the enemy and his capability to make war. It establishes momentum to deny the enemy's ability to concentrate against friendly vulnerabilities. The inherent flexibility of maneuver makes it a very efficient medium to set the terms of an engagement and to focus combat power against the enemy center of gravity, especially since centers of gravity can change during the course of a campaign.

Doctrine finds maneuver at each level of military activity. Strategically, maneuver implies flexible thoughts, plans and operations that can react rapidly to unforeseen circumstances, mobility to project and concentrate power and maneuverability in theater to focus on the enemy's weaknesses. (2:175) Tactically, maneuver seeks to set the terms of combat in a battle or engagement. (11:63) Operationally, maneuver seeks a decisive impact in a campaign by orienting on the enemy center of gravity. (11:63) Scale alone does not make maneuver operational. Operational maneuver secures positions of advantage before the battle, creates a decisive weakness in the

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enemy position and exploits tactical successes to achieve strategic results. (12:7)

Finally, the nature of modern warfare is such that operational maneuver cannot be thought of as solely a land force domain. As we shall see in MacArthur's campaign to the Philippines, operational maneuver must synchronize the effect of land, air and naval combat power to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage and create a decisive weakness.

LEE AND JACKSON

An instructive example of operational maneuver occurred in northern Virginia during the Civil War in the spring and summer of 1862. Confederate Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson won tactical battles in the Shenandoah Valley by outmaneuvering his opponents. General Robert E. Lee, who became the operational commander of the Virginian Theater in June 1862, supplied the vision to wield Jackson's tactical maneuvers as an instrument of operational art. (10:314) A short review of the theater situation, the Valley campaign and the battle for Richmond will highlight the distinction between maneuver at the tactical and operational levels.

Early 1862 saw initial Confederate victories overshadowed by the losses of Forts Henry and Donelson, Nashville, Norfolk and New Orleans. (8:2-3) The Union's strategy for defeating the Confederacy focused on the capture of Richmond, the Confederate capital. (8:22) Concurrently, Virginia became the Union's main theater of war because the main Confederate field army was located there.

In view of this strategy President Lincoln ordered Major General George B. McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, to capture Richmond (Map 1, The Battleground). McClellan planned to turn the Rebel flank by moving over 100,000 troops by sea to the Yorktown Peninsula, between the York and James River, and fight northwest up the peninsula to take Richmond. Concurrently, a holding force was needed to

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Map 1. The Battleground
(13:490)

prevent the Rebels from advancing either through Manassas or the Shenandoah Valley against Washington D.C. (4:6) Major General Nathaniel P. Banks was given the mission to cross the Potomac River, drive and contain Confederate forces deep within the Shenandoah Valley and then move the majority of his army to Manassas to protect Washington D.C. (8:22)

The Confederate strategy was essentially defensive, hoping to make the war so costly to the Union that hostilities would end. The South sought to protect its capital at all costs. Richmond's loss would be a mortal blow that would insure a demoralized population and discourage foreign recognition and aid. (8:23) General Joseph E. Johnston, Confederate commander of the Department of Northern Virginia, deployed his army to defend the approaches to Richmond. To protect his left flank, Johnston ordered General Jackson, dubbed "Stonewall" at the first battle of Manassas, to keep Banks in the Shenandoah Valley, and be ready to assist in the battle around Richmond if required. (8:23)

The Shenandoah Valley in western Virginia is bordered on the east by the Blue Ridge Mountains and on the west by the Allegheny Mountains (Map 2,The Valley). The dominant feature within the Valley, is the Massanutten Mountain range, which is parallel to the Blue Ridge for fifty miles between Winchester and Staunton. (8:3-4) Lateral mountain passes in the Allegheny, Blue Ridge and Massanutten ranges are few and militarily significant because of the Valley's location. The

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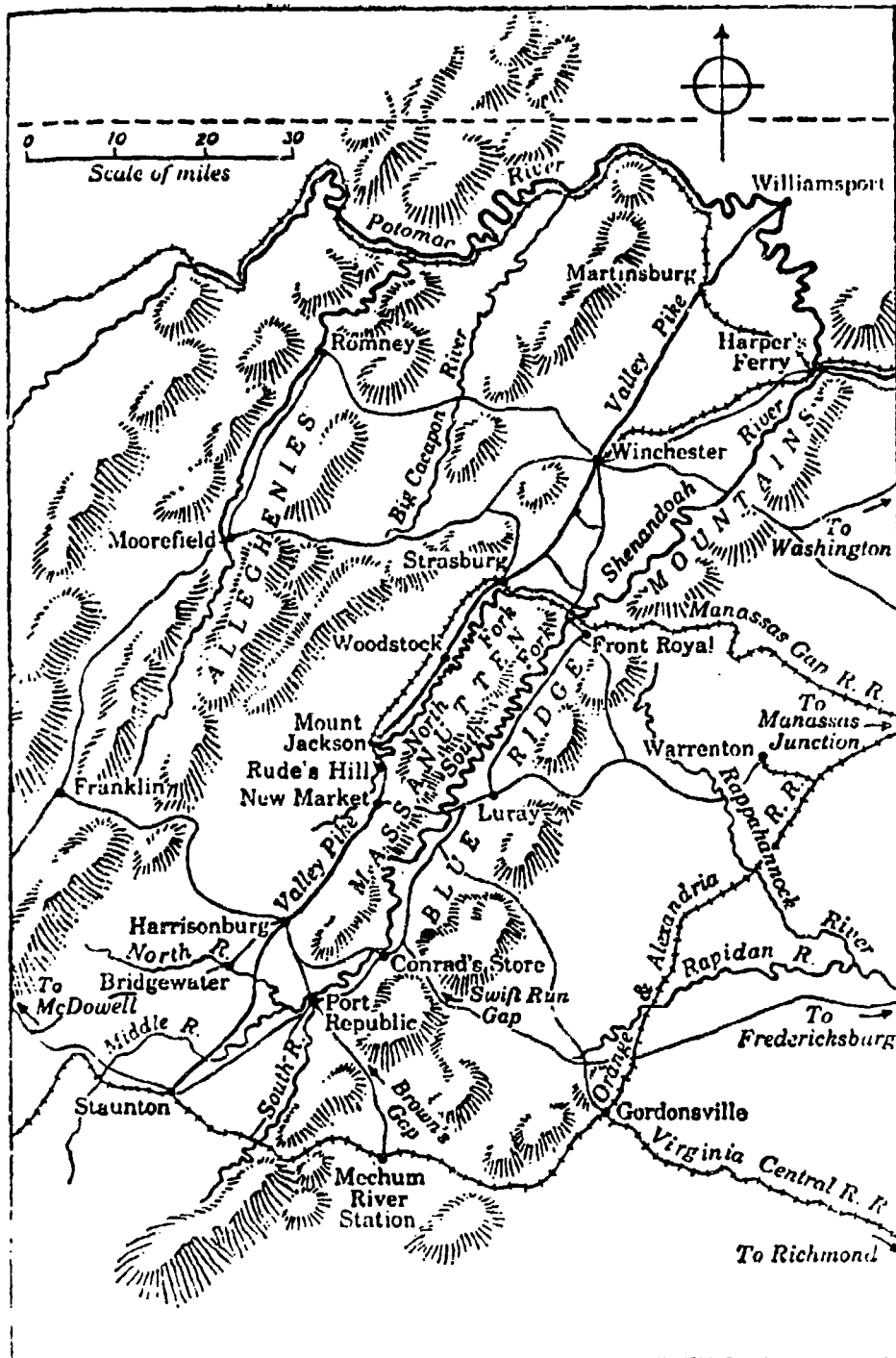
Map 2. The Valley
(10:114)

northern end of the Valley rests on the Potomac about thirty miles North of Washington D.C. and 150 miles north of Union lines in Kentucky and Illinois. Thus, the Union's east-west road and rail lines of communication between theaters were vulnerable to Rebel interdiction. Similar vital lines of communication between theaters existed in the southern part of the Valley for the Confederacy. The Confederates also depended on the grain supplies and industrial base in the Valley. (10:40) Finally, the Valley provided a corridor into Maryland and Pennsylvania for the South, while it provided access to the mountain passes leading to the eastern Virginia planes and Richmond for the North. (4:9) Stonewall summed up the importance of the Shenandoah by stating "if this Valley is lost, Virginia is lost". (10:41)

Jackson successfully stymied the Federals in the Valley through the spring of 1862. His prime weapon was the ability to tactically outmaneuver the enemy to concentrate superior numbers at the decisive point, even when the opponent, in the vicinity of the battle area, was much stronger. (4:3) The speed and range of his infantry was such that it became known as Jackson's "foot cavalry". (8:31) From 30 April until 9 June 1862, the "foot cavalry" covered nearly four hundred miles. (10:319) It maneuvered across the Valley to defeat Union forces attempting to link up with Banks, and then again crossed the Valley to attack Banks at Front Royal. After a victory at Winchester, Jackson outmaneuvered the Union attempt to double

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envelope him at Strasburg and moved to Port Republic, where he defeated isolated Union forces. (8:31)

Jackson's tactical victories in the Shenandoah provided the Confederacy considerable leverage. General Banks was kept in the Valley instead of moving to Manassas. Brigadier General Irvin McDowell's corps of 40,000 was detached from McClellan's turning force and ordered to Manassas to protect Washington. (8:22) McDowell's move was supposed to be only temporary until Jackson could be bottled up in the Valley. Stonewall did not cooperate, and more Union divisions were rushed to the Valley at the expense of McClellan's peninsular force.

General Robert E. Lee sensed the North's temerity on the peninsula and sensitivity about the security of Washington. Upon assuming command of Confederate forces in June 1862, Lee immediately implemented a bold operational plan. (10:314) Initially he sent 8000 men to Jackson in the Valley. "He harbored no illusion that these 8000 could make a major offensive into Union territory, but they could take the Valley Army close enough to Washington to keep a significant number of Union troops immobilized far from Richmond." (10:315) To heighten Lincoln's concern, Lee insured the 8000's movement was discovered by the North. Lee then ordered Jackson to attack Banks at New Market and Harrisonburg and drive him back to the Potomac. (3:267)

By mid-June, Union troops in the Valley were forced northward, the time was right and Lee sent for Jackson. He

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ordered Stonewall; "leave your enfeebled troops to watch the country and guard the passes, covered by your cavalry and artillery move your main body rapidly... to sweep down between the Chickahominy and the Pamunkey, cutting up the enemy's communications". (13:286-287) While Jackson occupied the Federals on the Chickahominy, Lee's main body would attack McClellan's main force on the peninsula. (13:286-287)

Jackson's "foot cavalry" quickly marched to the critical Richmond battlefield and on 27 June, in battles around Cold Harbor and Gaines' Mill, broke the Federal line (Map 3, Seven Days' Battles). Union forces north of the Chickahominy were routed and fled across the river, thereby weakening McClellan's line and threatening his overland lines of communication. (13:310-311) Lee, in the subsequent "Seven Days' Battles" was able to force McClellan to retreat. He did not have enough strength to evict McClellan from the peninsula, but the .siege of Richmond was lifted. (13:326) After a few days rest Jackson was sent to contend with a new threat to the Confederacy from the newly formed Union Army of Virginia under General Pope. (13:326)

ANALYSIS

In the spring and summer of 1862 the odds against the South were great and the fall of Richmond seemed inevitable. (3:265) General Joseph Johnston can be credited with the fundamental plan to threaten the Federals in the Valley to prevent Union reinforcement of McClellan's Peninsular campaign

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Map 3. Seven Days' Battles
(3:295)

against Richmond. (3:267) However, he limited the diversion to Union troops in or near the Valley proper. He kept the Valley operations a sideshow, never imagining they might immobilize Union forces far beyond the Blue Ridge. (10:313-314)

Stonewall's battles in the Shenandoah succeeded beyond Johnston's expectations. Jackson proved to be an aggressive master of maneuver who consistently thwarted the Union's plan to isolate him in the Valley. His quick eye for the military aspects of terrain had much to do with his victories in the Shenandoah. His tactical maneuvers exploited any possible terrain or positional advantage. At Kernstown and Port Republic he saw and seized key terrain without hesitation, (Map 4 Jackson in the Valley). At Winchester, when part of his force was checked on the right, three brigades suddenly attacked the opposite flank and completely rolled up the Federal line. At Port Republic, a brigade's unexpected advance through the tangled forests decided the engagement. The successful cavalry charge at Front Royal was perfectly timed and positioned. In fact, throughout the battles in the Valley, Jackson's cavalry utilized superior mobility to screen the advance and check the pursuit. (3:273-274)

Jackson also skillfully maneuvered about the obstacle of the Massanutten range, which was parallel to his line of operation, to defeat isolated Union forces. His quick movement to key terrain, where he could control both the eastern and western corridors of the Valley, was decisive. (10:116-117)

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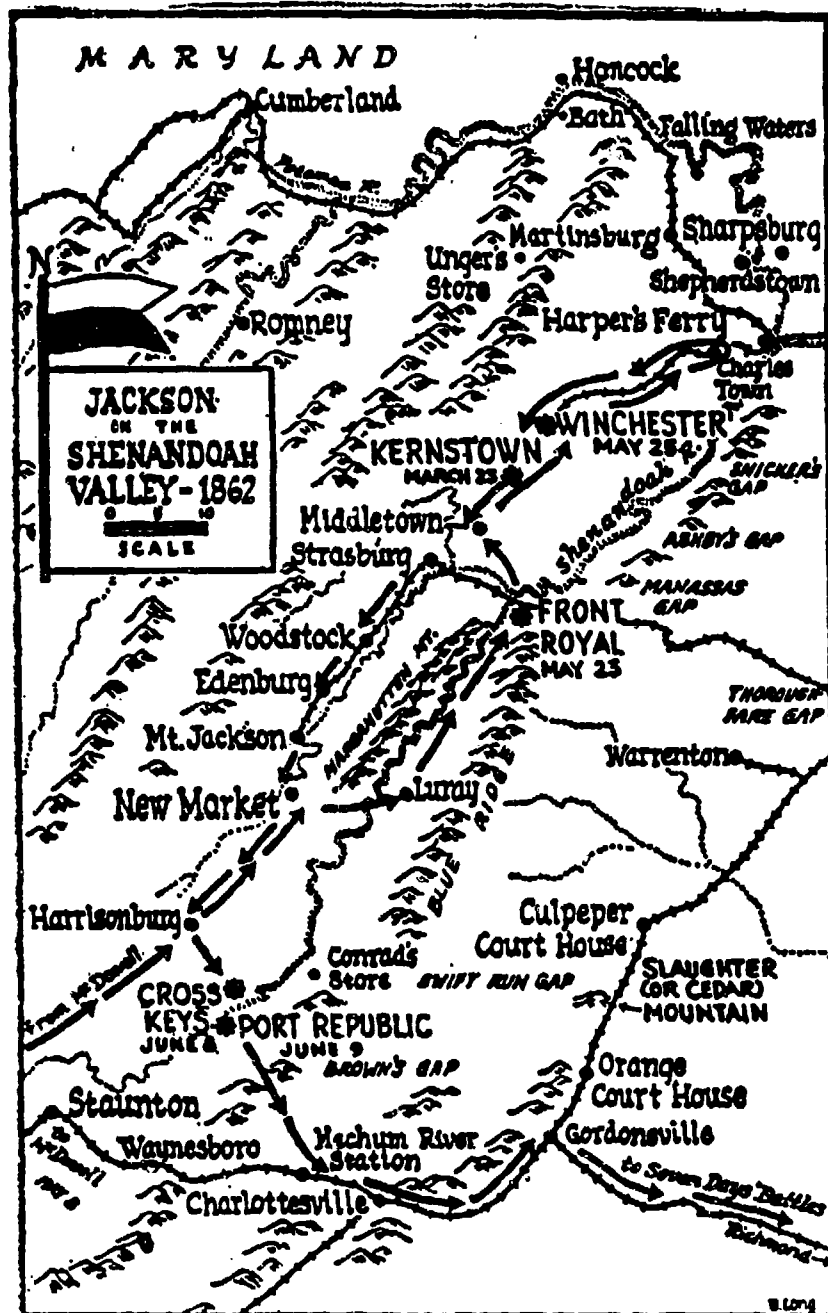
Map 4. Jackson in the Valley
(3:229)

Union forces were unable to concentrate because of the Massanutten obstacle, yet Jackson could quickly move the majority of his force to the critical battle on either side of the range.

Jackson's success in the Valley became legendary, but McClellan continued his methodical advance against Richmond. It was General Lee's vision and ability as an operational commander that synchronized Jackson's tactical successes to achieve the strategic objective. Lee observed that political interference constantly hampered McClellan's campaign to capture Richmond. When Washington was threatened by an advance up the Shenandoah Valley, Lincoln diverted forces from McClellan. (4:7) It became obvious that the Federal capital was a vulnerable center of gravity. Its loss could have resulted in Maryland and Delaware seceding from the Union, and some European countries recognizing the Confederate States of America. (4:2-3) Lee sensed President Lincoln did not realize that detachments made for the defense of the capital reduced McClellan's strength, and if the Confederates were free to maneuver, they could choose the time and place to concentrate against isolated Union formations. (4:10-11)

Lee's plan for victory was based on maneuvering Jackson's forces to gain positional and psychological advantage over the North by threatening Washington D.C., the enemy center of gravity. This maneuver would concurrently prevent the loss of Richmond, the Southern center of gravity. When Lee assumed

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command in June 1862, he directed a defense around Richmond and a vigorous offensive in the Valley to disperse the enemy by appearing to threaten the Federal capital from the Shenandoah. When the stage was set and the odds in favor in the South, he maneuvered to concentrate on the Chickahominy and defeat McClellan. (3:267) The 8000 reinforcements to the Valley were not merely a ruse, but were sent to prey on the North's sensitivity about Washington. When Jackson scraped that nerve raw, he would come to Richmond to concentrate against McClellan. (10:315)

McDowell was withdrawn form McClellan a total of five times because of Jackson's victories in the Valley. (4:39) In sum, Jackson, with 17,000 men kept Banks with 20,000, McDowell with 40,000 and 21,000 other Union soldiers tied up in the Shenandoah campaign. (4:9) On the Yorktown peninsula, McClellan had only 58,000 to threaten Richmond instead of his whole army of over 100,000. (4:39)

Lee's plan was more than just an attempt to disperse Union strength. It called for an operational maneuver of Jackson's forces to defeat McClellan. In late June when McClellan was entrenched within sight of Richmond, where were the thousands of Union soldiers that should have aided his assault? Where were those forces that could have encircled Richmond, cut communications and supply routes and overwhelmed the defenses? (3:265-266) "What mysterious power compelled Lincoln to retain a force larger than the whole Confederate Army to protect the

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National capital from danger?" (3:266) It was Lee's campaign of operational maneuver which capitalized on the tactical maneuvers of Jackson in the Shenandoah to relieve pressure on Richmond and lure what remained of McClellan's troops into a vulnerable position. (3:266) Lee then maneuvered Jackson to concentrate against McClellan's vulnerability in eastern Virginia and saved Richmond.

MACARTHUR

An examination of General Douglas MacArthur's operations in the Southwest Pacific Theater (SWPA) from 1942 until 1944 will provide insight into the nature and effect of operational maneuver in an immense, challenging and more recent theater of war.

The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor in December 1941 succeeded in destroying or incapacitating a sizeable portion of the US Navy's surface fleet in the Pacific. For the next several months the Japanese juggernaut piled up conquests in Burma, Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines, Solomons, and much of New Guinea (Map 5 Pacific Overview). They were the dominant military force in areas that guaranteed access to raw materials, such as oil and rubber, which were vital to the Imperial war effort. (9:2) Allied defenses crumbled, Japan threatened air and sea lines of communication to Australia, and an attack against the continent was a distinct possibility. (5:338)

Despite the deteriorating situation, President Roosevelt declared, after conferring with Prime Minister Churchill in late December 1941, that US war strategy would first join with the United Kingdom, Russia and other allies to defeat German; in Europe, remain initially on the strategic defensive in the Pacific, then turn full force on Japan after European victory. 7:28).

MacArthur arrived in Australia on 17 March 1942, fresh

from the Philippine debacle, and assumed command of SWPA on 18 April. He was responsible for military operations in the area as shown on Map 6, to include Australian land and sea approaches north and northeast. (7:20) MacArthur was initially ordered to "hold Australia as a base for future offensive action against Japan; sustain the US position in the Philippines, support operations... in the adjacent Pacific Ocean Area (POA) Theater and Indian Ocean; and prepare to "take the initiative." (7:20) "Take the initiative" was clarified by follow-on orders on 2 July 1942 required the recapture of the Solomons, New Ireland, and New Britain including Rabaul. (5:341)

Common geographical characteristics of SWPA area include an oppressive, disease-ridden, tropical climate and vast expanses of ocean separating island archipelagos of varying size. The islands generally have heavy jungle, mountainous terrain, few roads and poor port facilities. The 1600 mile long island of New Guinea dominates the area. It is the second largest island in the world, and has precipitous mountain ranges running virtually its entire length. At the island's eastern extension on the Papuan peninsula, the peaks of the Owen Stanley range reach over 16,000 feet (Map 7, Papua New Guinea). (6:23) Superimposing the vast area on a map of the United States with the western tip of New Guinea's Vogelkop peninsula at Seattle, Washington, Milne Bay in southeastern
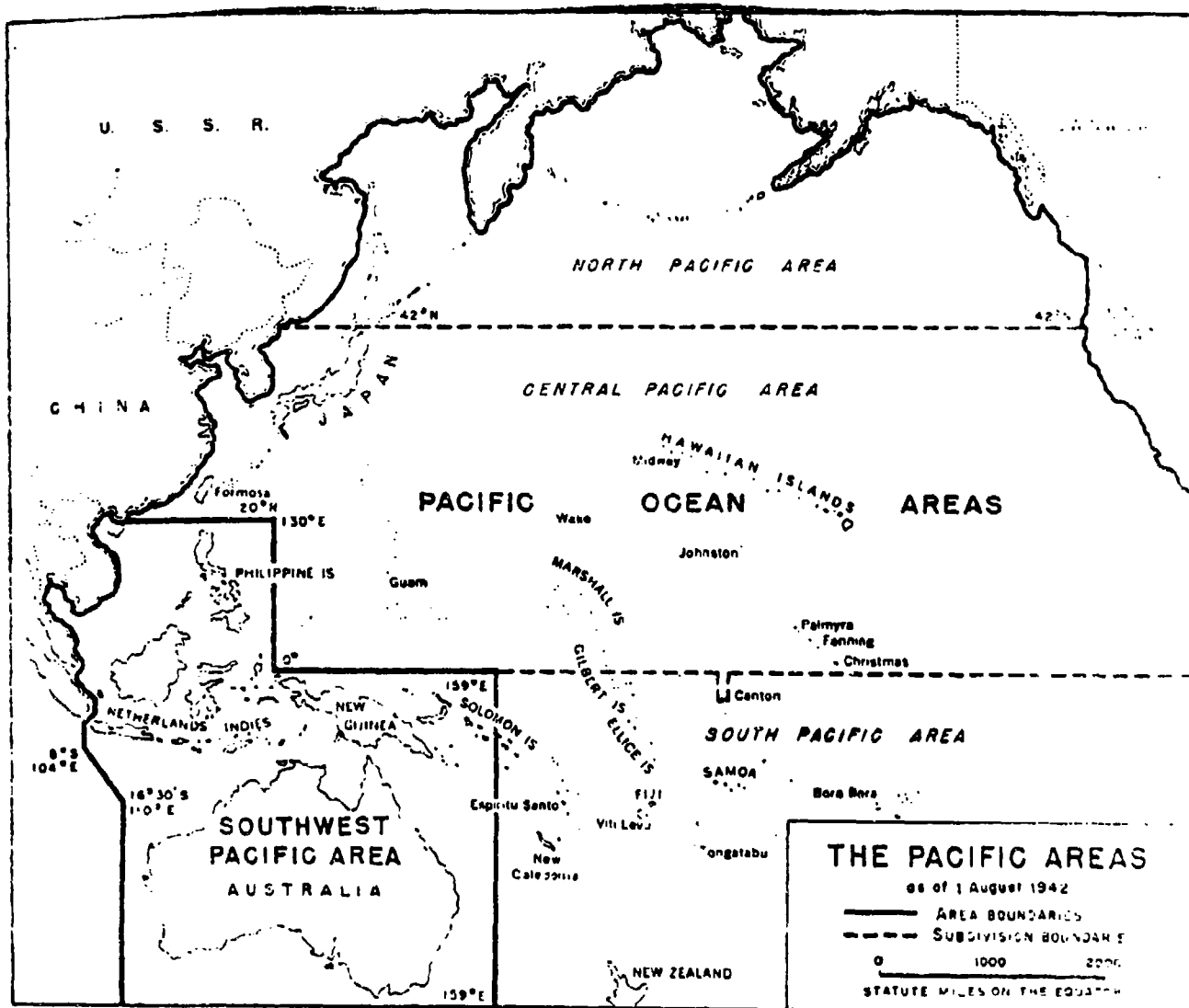
Map 6. The Pacific Areas
(6:6)

Map 7. Papua New Guinea
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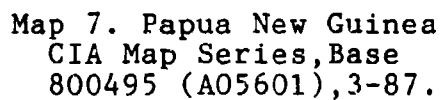
Papua lies in Colorado, and the Solomon Islands lie in the Missouri and Mississippi Valleys. (6:24)

MacArthur had little time to formulate his operational plan. Japanese defeats at the battles of Coral Sea and Midway failed to discourage their offensive. By mid-July 1942 they were building an airfield on Guadacanal, and preparing to invade Milne Bay on the eastern tip of Papua. Their ultimate goal in New Guinea was Port Moresby, one of the last critical allied holdings on the southeastern Papuan coast, and a springboard to Australia. (5:341)

The Australian government and many on MacArthur's staff were preparing to defend Australia directly on the continent. Plans were made to sacrifice the Great Western and Northern regions of Australia, and defend from the Brisbane line, a militarily defensible position running roughly along the Tropic of Capricorn. MacArthur, to the consternation of many Australian officials, declared he would defend Australia from New Guinea. (5:341-344) The General ordered an active rather than a passive defense. He would not be thrown out of Papua and allow the Japanese a base of operations less than 400 miles from the Australian mainland. His ultimate campaign goal was to reduce Rabaul, the enemy's strategic base on New Britain and their center of gravity in theater. To prepare for the reduction of Rabaul, he planned to secure Port Moresby as a base of operations, attack across the Owen Stanley Range and

take the enemy outposts of Buna and Gona on the northern Papuan coast. (5:344-345)

MacArthur's defense of Australia by an offensive in Papua was potentially frustrated by the enemy naval threat to the moat of the Coral Sea lying between Port Moresby and his supply depots in Australia. (5:349) He had three infantry divisions ready for combat, but with Japanese fleets roaming the sea, sending them northward in ships would entail unacceptable risks. (5:349) He turned to his air guru, General George Kenney to solve the problem. Kenney capitalized on the new capabilities of airpower to move ground troops to Moresby, keep them supplied and push MacArthur's bomber line closer to the enemy. (5:350)

By mid-September MacArthur's combat power was positioned at Port Moresby ready to start the offensive. The Japanese had advanced over the Kokoda trail to within a few miles of Moresby, but the punishing terrain and valiant Australian defenders finally force a Japanese retreat. Even though it was the rainy season, MacArthur seized the initiative and ordered his commanders to push the enemy back across the mountains and secure Buna and Gona. (5:351) The jungle, terrain and weather made the attack a slow, agonizing ordeal of frontal infantry assaults and attrition warfare. MacArthur's soldiers eventually prevailed over both the terrible jungle conditions and enemy defenses and took Buna and Gona in mid-January 1943. The Japanese withdrew what was left of their forces further up

the northern New Guinea coast. (5:237)   The threat to the
Australian mainland was blunted.

MacArthur was now positioned to maneuver against Rabaul.
Operationally the maneuver was "governed by two basic concepts:
the progressive forward movement of air forces and   the
isolation of Rabaul before the final assault." (6:5)   The
Joint Chiefs authorized his general directive authority over
Admiral Halsey's forces who had just secured Guadacanal.
Therefore, his campaign plan, ELKTON, envisioned mutually
supporting air,land and naval offensives along two axes -- the
northern coast of New Guinea and northward up the Solomon
chain, culminating in a converging attack against Rabaul.
(6:13)   The general scheme of maneuver was to advance the
bomber line towards Rabaul by seizing areas for forward air
bases, or by seizing Japanese airdromes.   Land forces, covered
by air and naval forces were to consolidate successive
objectives.   Allied aviation would hit Japanese air and sea
bases to deny resupply and reinforcement.(6:26)

In late June 1943 the operation began with Halsey
invading New Georgia, US Army forces occupying key islands
northeast of Papua and Australians landing just south of
Salamaua in New Guinea. By November, Army forces landed on New
Britain, Rabaul's island, and American bombers were hammering
Japanese headquarters as far north as Wewak in New Guinea. By
January 1944, MacArthur's bombers were hitting Rabaul from
bases in western New Britain as well as from Bougainville.

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Rabaul's supply lines were cut, Japanese planes and ships departed westward to more secure bases and the 100,000 Japanese defending Rabaul dug in for a fight to the last -- a fight they never fought. (5:386-387)

To the surprise of the Japanese, MacArthur bypassed and isolated Rabaul. In a daring operation, he seized control of the Admiralty Islands, and further enveloped strong Japanese forces by leapfrogging 400 miles to Hollandia on New Guinea (Map 8, The Westward Drive). He repeated this strategy up the northern New Guinea coast until he successfully secured the Vogelkop peninsula by the end of July 1944. (5:389-394) In September he jumped to Morotai, the northernmost island of the Moluccas. With that bound he was poised to return the final 300 miles to the Philippines. (5:431) The Japanese bypassed at Rabaul and other key strongholds on the northern New Guinea coast remained isolated and meaningless to the Imperial war effort in theater.

ANALYSIS

MacArthur's consistently sought positional advantage over the enemy and capitalized on the momentum operational maneuver builds in the offensive. Early in the Australian campaign, when lack of resources seemed to require a defensive posture, MacArthur remained offensively oriented. By establishing his base of operations at Port Moresby rather than Australia, he disrupted the Japanese offensive. He chose to fight on his terms rather than waiting behind the moat for the enemy attack.
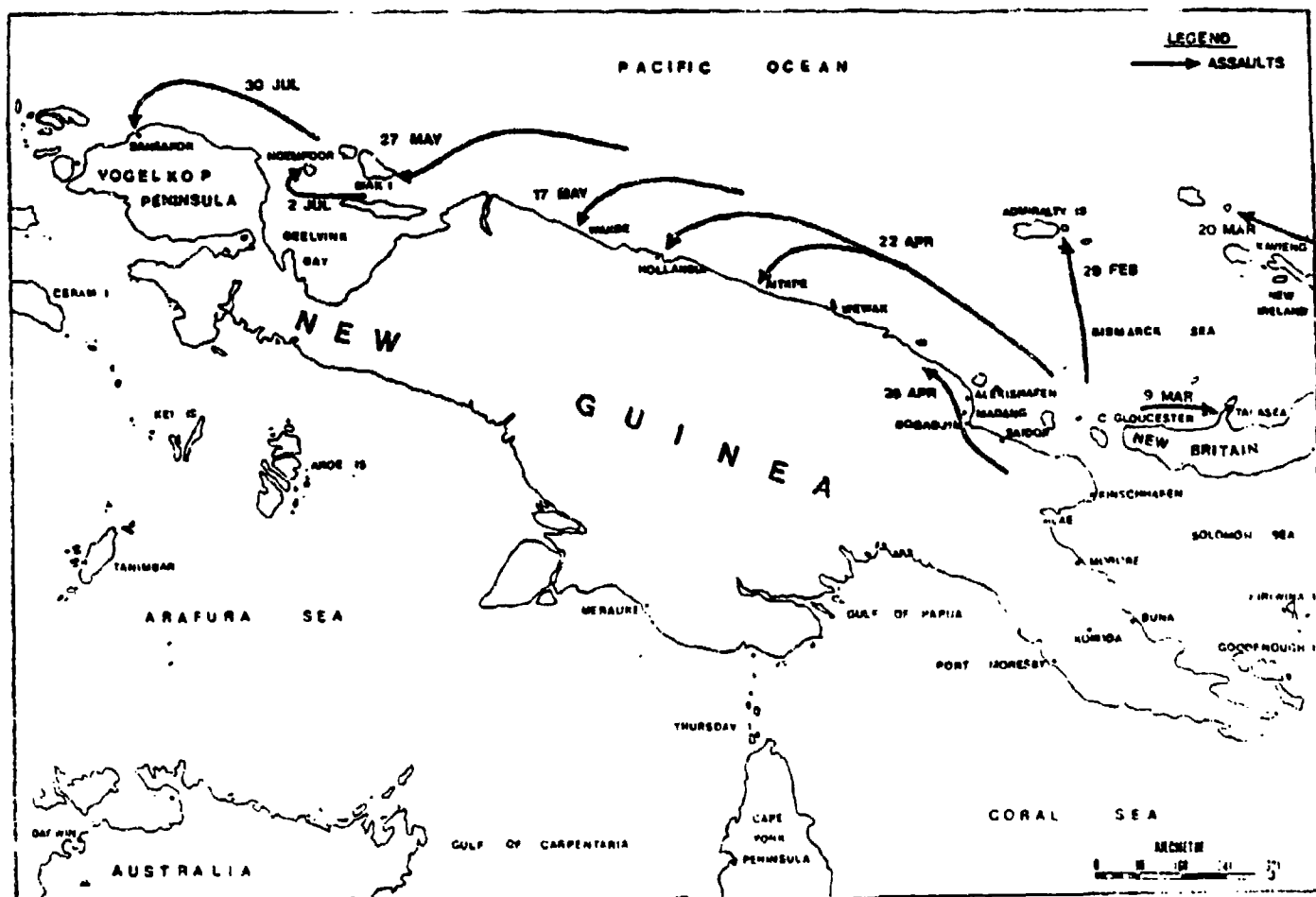
Map 8. The Westward Drive
(6:303)

The attack across the Owen Stanley Range was basically a frontal assault. It was a battle of attrition, uncharacteristic for MacArthur. Nevertheless, he reasoned "better a bloody, head-on grinding collision on Papua than a battle of maneuver when he had no troops to spare for maneuvering". (5:346) The advantages that sprang from seizing the initiative were too great, and he felt the fall of Buna and Gona would open the entire Southwest Pacific for a war of maneuver and envelopment. (5:374) Even though his ground forces were forced into a slow, agonizing, deadly land battle, MacArthur kept pressure on the enemy center of gravity. The advance to Papua made a bomber offensive against Rabaul possible. (5:345) The heavy jungle fighting did not divert him from attacking the enemy's source of combat power in theater.

ven sufficient resources, MacArthur would probably have prefɛ ɔd to execute a combined vertical and amphibious envelopment in Papua. ELKTON, his plan for the rest of the campaign, followed just such a model. MacArthur did not frontaliy assault enemy strength, as he was forced to in Papua. Rather, he capitalized upon enemy vulnerabilities, planned flexible operations, innovatively used new weapons and technology, and husbanded his resources. His mutually supporting land, air and naval forces enveloped strongly defended positions, cut lines of communication to render them useless and gained a positional advantage against the enemy center of gravity. (5:388-389) Colonel Matsuichi Juio, a

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senior Japanese intelligence officer charged with deciphering the General's intentions, told postwar interrogators that MacArthur's swooping envelopment of Japanese strongholds was the type of strategy the Japanese hated most. MacArthur repeatedly seized a relatively weak area, constructed airfields, cut supply lines to the area and starved out the strong point -- all with minimum friendly losses. (5:391) MacArthur repeated the strategy as he swept up the New Guinea coast which decisively weakened the Japanese position in SWPA.

MacArthur understood and capitalized on the inherent mobility and capability of air power. The case could be made that the air dimension enabled MacArthur's rapid offensive maneuvers. Forward bounds were limited only by the B-17's range into enemy territory of 925 miles. (5:236) The General also used air transport to rapidly resupply air and ground forces. Without the innovative utilization of air superiority fighters and airlift assets, like the C-47, MacArthur's forces risked annihilation as lines of communication lengthened. (5:326)

Some historical analysts argue the operational maneuvers against Rabaul and beyond were not MacArthur originals. (5:239) Nevertheless, it was MacArthur, the operational commander, who fine tuned the maneuvers to an art in his theater and succeeded in accomplishing the strategic goal.

SUMMARY

The civil war vignette provides an insight into the use of maneuver as a tactic and at the operational level of war. Stonewall Jackson's battles in the Shenandoah exploited the Valley's terrain and the mobility of his force to concentrate combat power against inferior enemy formations and positions. Stonewall maneuvered all available elements of combat power — artillery, infantry and cavalry — to set favorable terms for his engagements. He consistently used maneuver to ensure his forces secured positional advantage. The momentum of his force kept ·Federal commanders on the defensive or reacting to his maneuvers. He defeated superior Union formations and retained the bulk of the Shenandoah in Confederate hands, but this alone did not substantially reduce the strategic threat to Richmond. Confederate control of the Shenandoah was extremely important to the war effort. The security of Richmond was vital.

General Lee maneuvered Jackson at the operational level. He reinforced Jackson and targeted him against the Union center of gravity, its capital city. Washington D.C. represented the central embodiment of the Federal will to fight for President Lincoln. Jackson did not have enough resources to physically capture Washington, but Lee created that illusion in Lincoln's mind by ordering a vigorous offensive in the Valley. Lee threatened the enemy center of gravity and protected his own with the same maneuver. He used Jackson's success in the Valley to disrupt McClellan's operation against Richmond and

create a decisive weakness in the enemy's position. Lee then capitalized on Jackson's mobility, maneuvered him from the Shenandoah and concentrated Confederate combat power against the weakened Union forces around Richmond.

After the loss of the Philippines, Australia and its lines of communication to the Allies became the center of gravity in the Southwest Pacific Area Theater. Allied strategy required MacArthur to defend Australia and ultimately take the initiative against key Japanese island bases, especially Rabaul. MacArthur decided to implement a campaign of offensive maneuver against the Japanese and their center of gravity at Rabaul, rather than defend from the Australian continent.

MacArthur met the strategic goal by successfully defending his center of gravity, Australia. Initially he was required to fight a battle of limited maneuver and attrition on Papua. Nevertheless, he remained offensively oriented and refused to let the enemy dictate the terms of the engagement. His campaign objective was to take key enemy positions that could contribute to the defense of Rabaul or an attack against Australia. After placing the enemy in an disadvantageous position in Papua, he bypassed the enemy's strength at Rabaul. A direct attack on Rabaul was unnecessary because MacArthur isolated it and made it meaningless to the Japanese war effort in theater. Bypassing Rabaul created a decisive weakness in the Japanese position in theater and opened the way to the Philippines. Finally, his campaign focused all available

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elements of combat power against the enemy. He innovatively
utilized air power to both spearhead his attack and sustain his
ground and naval offensive.

CONCLUSION

Maneuver concentrates the other elements of combat power at advantageous locations to defeat the enemy. It is a basic method of fighting used throughout the ages. However, this definition is much to shallow for operational maneuver.

Doctrine states the operational level of war employs military forces in campaigns to attain national strategic goals in a theater of war. (2:5) Operational campaigns target combat power -- composed of maneuver, firepower, protection and leadership -- against the enemy's center of gravity. At the same time operational commanders protect their own key vulnerabilities. (2:179-180) "Operational art is the vital link between the strategic aim or aims, and the tactical employment of forces on the battlefield. (12:1)

Lee's campaign attained the Confederate strategic goal of protecting Richmond from McClellan. He maneuvered against the Union center of gravity, optimally sequenced tactical engagements in the Shenandoah and around Richmond, maneuvered the enemy into a decisively weak position, and defeated the Federal will to continue the attack against Richmond.

MacArthur's operations met the Allied strategic goal of defending Australia and its lines of communications to the Allies. He focused his attack against Rabaul, the enemy's center of gravity in theater. He maneuvered combat power to concentrate against and disperse weakened enemy formations, and created a decisive weakness in the enemy position by isolating

Rabaul. He then bypassed the enemy stronghold and continued up along the Northern New Guinea coast to force the enemy to abandon hopes of attacking Australia.

Doctrine, Lee's defense of Richmond and MacArthur's campaign in the Southwest Pacific Theater expose the essence of operational maneuver. Maneuver at the operational level must seek a decisive impact in a campaign by orienting on the enemy center of gravity and creating, or capitalizing upon, a decisive enemy weakness. (2:175) Operational maneuver concentrates forces, capabilities and combat power at the right time and at advantageous positions to threaten, disperse or defeat the enemy's will or capability to fight. Finally, operational maneuver is the link between strategy and tactics. It secures advantageous positions before the battle and maneuvers all available combat power to exploit tactical success and achieve strategic results. (12:7)

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